

The Man Nobody Knew

By HOLWORTHY HALL

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"ONCE I LOVED HIM."

Synopsis.—Dick Morgan of Syracuse, N. Y., a failure in life, enlisted in the Foreign Legion of the French army under the name of Henry Hilliard, is disgraced by shrapnel. The French surgeons ask for a photograph to guide them in restoring his face. In his race against life he offers in derision a picture postcard bearing the radiant face of Christ. The surgeons do a good job. On his way back to America he meets Martin Harmon, a New York broker. The result is that Morgan, under the name of Hilliard and unrecognized as Morgan, goes back to Syracuse to sell a mining stock. He is determined to make good. He tells people of the death of Morgan. He finds in Angela Cullen a loyal defender of Dick Morgan. He meets Carol Durant, who had refused to marry him.

CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

"And . . . and I want to thank you now," she said in a tone which would have fallen as a blessing upon the ears of any other man alive, "for speaking as though you loved him. And for all you did for him. Perhaps you know already . . . perhaps you can't know . . . but I'm trying to tell you, because he was . . . he was one of my very dearest friends."

His brain snapped; he bent down to her.

"You loved him—too?" he said, uncontrollably.

"Yes," she said. "Once—I loved him, too!"

Alone in the appointed guest room of the Cullen home—for Mr. Cullen had been as good as his word, and sent a car to fetch his visitor's belongings—Hilliard lighted a cigarette (an acquired taste, but advisable as a minor deception, since he had been notorious for his taste in cigars) and grinned expansively. Leisurely he began to undress, but before his shoes were quite unlaced, he sat back comfortably in his chair and meditated.

"All serene so far," he said. "But when Carol came in . . ." He shook his head vigorously. "Well, it's over . . . anyway. The doctor . . ." Hilliard's face darkened. "There's the man I want to get at! Pious old hypocrite! And he didn't think I deserved to be in the family! Sort of hate to let him make money out of this deal, but it's all in the game. Coals of fire! But ten thousand's a lot from the doctor . . . we'll say ten thousand."

He closed his eyes dreamily; and his thoughts reverted to Doctor Durant to the doctor's daughter.

"Carol—Carol!" he murmured. "One minute there, I thought I'd crack. And I was 'one of her dearest friends.' I was? And she loved me—once. Once! Pity it wasn't twice! Pity she and the doctor didn't say so the night they kicked me out so neatly. Well, . . . business is business . . . After they've made their money out of it, and found out this man Hilliard's some little gold-plated whirwind all by himself . . . Gad! can't I see their faces when they get the truth of it!"

With the cigarette drooping from his lips, he stood up and swept a clear space in the table. From his suitcase he exhumed a tablet of thin transparent writing paper of a kind not sold in America; it was the paper on which the letter to Cullen from Richard Morgan had been written, and it was sheer luck that Hilliard had brought the remainder of the tablet from New York with him. He tossed a blob of ink from his fountain pen and inspected it critically.

"Too black," he decided, and went to the bathroom, where he half-emptied the reservoir of the pen and refilled it with water.

"That ought to be just about right . . . sort of pale and mysterious and war-strength."

He seated himself at the table, took the pen in his left hand and inscribed circles on the paper; scribbled a meaningless sentence and laughed gently.

"Funny how some people can be ambidextrous and take so long to realize it. If I hadn't caught a bullet in my arm, and tried to write left-handed in the hospital, I'd give myself away up here in no time. Writing's too blasted distinctive. But, as it is, Left Hand, very large and plain, is Henry Hilliard—here he shifted the pen to the other hand—"And Right—and small and curlicue, is poor, dead Dicky Morgan—"one of her dearest friends." I'm glad I killed that chap off—he never amounted to a hill of beans anyway. But this Hilliard person—a live wire, boy, a live wire!"

And with a grin of sardonic humor, he wrote on the flimsy paper, slowly and a little irregularly, as though in physical discomfort:

"Neully, 7-10-15.

"No matter what you ever think, no matter what you have ever thought, I have loved you."

He grimaced, pondered diligently, and made a correction.

"I have always loved you more than my own life. You said my ideals had fallen—do you think so now? I don't, dearest; I think they're almost what

you would have them. And it may be that simply because of that, I've loved you more every day, and—"

Hilliard sat back, and his eyes were softly luminous.

"Suppose, by the luck of the very devil, I should fall in love with her again?" he said aloud. "Suppose I should!" He tossed away his cigarette and rested his head in his hands. "Oh, Carol! I did care . . ." His shoulders shook spasmodically; then all at once he flung himself out of the chair and took to tramping the floor in a hurricane of emotion. His face was set in granite; he caught sight of it in a mirror, halted and himself was stunned by the transcendent mask which covered his soul in revolt. The work of the surgeons was not far short of miraculous; he couldn't upset it, not by any effort of his will. The eyes might flash, or lower, or chill—the other features were still calm and strong in their splendid glow. Even now, the face which he saw reflected in the mirror was one to convert the most hurried of all passing strangers to a new, if unformed, assurance in the brotherhood of man.

"You dirty blackguard!" said Hilliard, showing his teeth. He went pensively back to the letter, studied it, gazed at the floor.

"But after all," he said, "no matter what she or anybody else did to me . . . and if I can kill two birds with one stone, and be what I've wanted to be—all except this damnable way of going about it . . . She acted as though this infernal lying letter would please her—that's not the point; it's a quicker way to get at the doctor. . . . Well, it gets her a letter I never intended to write . . . and Dutout's war cross, too . . . that'll make it all the easier. . . . I'll give her that. Angela was going to have it, still. . . . So I was 'one of her dearest friends' was I? What's that worth to Henry Hilliard, bringing back the news from the front?" He sniffed scornfully. "Ten thousand dollars—I hope. And the doctor'll make twenty out of it. . . . Gad! that's turning the other cheek with a vengeance! Hanged if I don't almost wish he'd lose his rotten money! But that can't be helped—I'll get some satisfaction somehow."

He reread the unfinished note, folded it, creased it heavily for versimilitude, and gave it the final examination.

"Business . . . is business," he said, musing. "That was a pretty sporty thing for me to do . . . to tell her there was a letter. Bit of a chance, too. And after smashing our engagement, she could stand there and tell me . . . oh, rubbish! So suppose we say . . . fifteen thousand from the doctor! But confound it—the better salesman I am, the more I get out of him, the more he makes! Whew! Where's the satisfaction in that? . . ."

His pupils had narrowed again, giving the lie to the sweetness of his



Hilliard Was Staring Fixedly.

smiling mouth. Then the smile faded and Hilliard was staring fixedly at the document in his hands.

"I wonder who in thunder that man Armstrong is?" said the masquerader who had prided himself that he no longer cared.

CHAPTER V.

He wakened early; and in that state of half-conscious reverie which has less of worldliness in it than perhaps any other state of human existence, he lay vegetating, subtly aware that he was very peaceful and content; but presently, when his brain had yawned and stretched itself, and begun to set about its usual functions (or, in other words, when Hilliard was sufficiently aroused to resume his usual introspectiveness) he was extremely unhappy, and not in the least vainglorious.

He scowled, and struggled to remember what it was that had risen out of thin air and angered him last night, at the very instant of his dropping off

to sleep. Not the Cullens, nor Carol himself, nor Armstrong . . . but wait a moment! Who was Armstrong? Whence and whither, Armstrong? A newcomer to Syracuse (that is, within two years) and already proprietary—Hilliard frowned, and rubbed his eyes, and wondered anew. He was a trifle amused and a trifle ashamed of himself; was it credible that he could be jealous of a man who had merely appropriated what Hilliard had no further interest in? How inconsistent . . . and yet how superbly characteristic of human nature! Hilliard chuckled to himself in recognition of it and dismissed the proposition as unworthy of further attention. Dismissed it, yes . . . as a child dismisses a rubber ball with an elastic cord attached to it.

From below stairs a Japanese gong chimed softly and Hilliard, without delaying another instant, leaped to the floor. Half an hour later, bathed, shaved and dressed, he descended complacently; the second day of his remarkable performance was begun.

The Cullens, father and daughter, were waiting for him. They greeted him cheerfully; and he was glad that grief hadn't clung to their eyelids; he would have felt depressed, even although he would have sensed the hidden compliment. Quick to grasp the nearest handle of diplomacy, he saw that cheerfulness on his own part would help the situation, for now that his duty as a courier was over, there was no need for long protracted melancholy.

It was a cheerful trio, then, that sat down to breakfast; there was no exhilaration about it, but at least there was no somber cloud of mourning. Angela, behind the coffee urn, had occasional moments of pensiveness, but that was to be expected, and condoned; indeed, Hilliard held himself to be greatly favored by even this.

She was imaginative, and Hilliard's pose was calculated to appeal to a lively imagination. He treated her not as a young girl, but with the respectful deference which belongs to a mature woman, a mistress of a household, and a hostess in her own right. She was charmed and captivated, and so was her father—most assuredly he was! So charmed, in fact, that instead of leaving for his office at half-past eight, he lingered until half-past nine; so captivated, that as his limousine seld quietly down the long, steep hill of James street, he found himself ascribing a new degree of credit to Dicky Morgan for the simple reason that Dicky Morgan had gained the full esteem of such a friend as Hilliard.

A mighty nice young man, thought Cullen. A man of soundest judgment, through and through. A man of brilliant intellect and razor-edged analysis. Had he not said, and furnished illustrations from his broad experience, exactly what Cullen himself had said, in regard to labor, and materials, and transportation, and production, these half a dozen years? Cullen sat back and smiled triumphantly. It does a man good to hear his pet convictions approved, expanded and laid down as axioms by another wise man.

Back on the wide veranda Angela had curled up comfortably in the hammock and, beside her, Hilliard was enjoying a cigarette. He was enjoying, too, this rare interlude of respite; he looked across at Angela, and thanked his stars for the invitation which had made this quiet hour possible.

She lifted her eyes, caught Hilliard smiling at her and blushed furiously, not for any shame accruing to her, but because she had arrived at the age of five blushes.

"I . . . suppose you're going over to Carol's pretty soon," she said, constrained to say something and grasping at the first available idea.

"So anxious to get rid of me?" he asked, amused.

"Oh, no!" Horror was in her tone and mortification. "Only . . . I wanted to talk to you before you saw Carol. Because Carol doesn't . . . I don't think she'll exactly feel as I do about this . . . I know she won't. Maybe it's because Dick and I were chums, and she and Dick were . . . oh, you know. It's different. You ought to take that into consideration—when you talk to her, I mean. I don't mean I don't care, because I do—terribly—but I . . . I can see what it meant to Dick . . . and I know how he'd have loved it, and picked this out of every possible way, to . . . end things, but Carol . . . she's different."

"How?" Hilliard's voice was even, but very low.

"Ouder," she said, looking away. "And . . . and they were going to marry each other some time."

"But wasn't that broken off?"

"Yes, but she was waiting."

"Waiting?"

"Why, of course."

Hilliard's breath quickened.

"I should have guessed that this Mr. Armstrong—"

"Oh, but that wasn't until she thought Dick wasn't ever coming back. And besides, she isn't really crazy about him—just lonesome."

"Indeed," Hilliard compelled himself to relax. "So you think she'll be . . . hurt?"

"Hurt?" Angela's voice was this with emphasis. "Rather!"

"If there's anything you think I'd better say, or not say—" He rose, out of sheer inability to endure this ingenious estimate of Carol's heartache. "Perhaps you'll tell me—because it's time for me to be going over."

Angela had risen, too, and stood beside him. Her features were composed, but still suggestive of inward emotions a little too tender to convey.

"If there's anybody in the world," she said, "who could give Carol any consolation just now, it's you. I don't suppose you ever were a minister, but you look as though everybody could come to you and tell 'most everything, and you'd help . . . anyway, you'd try to. So I wish you'd . . . you'd sit and listen . . . Carol's got to talk to somebody, and when you're hurt the way she is, you can't talk to your family . . . and you were a friend of Dick's. And . . ." She swallowed, and went on more slowly. "You can use your own judgment, of course, but if I were in your place—I'd lie."

"Lie?" he repeated, aghast.

"Yes, I would! He . . . he must have sent her some word, Mr. Hilliard! He must have!" She was desperately serious now, and thoroughly aroused. "It means the whole world to her! It's everything! Why, even I've got more than she has, and she was waiting for him to come back to her! I'd lie myself black in the face, but I'd tell her something—tell her anything I could think of to make her believe he hadn't stopped caring! It can't do any harm now. It can't hurt you. And I won't even ask you whether you do or not. Only you're here, and she'll trust you—"

"Will she?"

"How could she help it? And . . . and that's all. Please don't let her think he didn't care!"

Hilliard stood irresolute; chaos in his brain. "I'll . . . see," he said with difficulty. "I'll see."

"Won't you promise me? I won't ask you afterward, if you—"

"Does it mean so much to you?"

"Ever and ever so much. . . . Won't you please promise?"

He gazed at her a moment, yielded with a show of reluctance.

"Very well—I promise. Because you've asked it. And because it's the dearest, most generous, most thoughtful thing I ever heard of in all my life. . . . And after that, can't we be truly friends?"

Flushed, perplexed, honored, she gave him her hand with a hesitancy which betrayed the deep sense of complacency she felt.

"I don't think I could be prouder of anything that could possibly happen to me," she said.

Was it worth the blatant mummery he had conceived and executed? Was it not worth that, and infinitely more?

She was proud of his friendship . . . and she shared that distinction with no one else in the entire universe.

Proud of it! Hilliard was fulsomely abashed. Abashed—yes, and simultaneously glorified. He had come to make the city proud, ignorantly proud, of the man whose deeds had merited no renown. Here, at the very inception of his plans, a seventeen-year-old girl was proud of him as he was. Courage. Inspiration. Resolve.

He had won her respect by the promise of a lie; and in this instant he vowed to deserve, by other and increasing lies if need be, the prestige he was unalterably committed to gain, whereby the past should be as nothing, and the future should be a magnificent citadel of reconquered dreams.

She was proud of him, and she had approved the lie in behalf of Dicky Morgan's memory. Unwittingly, she had sanctioned the very purpose of his coming, and the method of his approach. She had confirmed his own intentions, and given him the will to advance. He was to act as the staunch defender of her playmate perished, and to make of himself a new and a better man, worthy of the eulogies which, as trustee, he now accepted for the unworthy Morgan. He consecrated himself to this end. Told himself fiercely that he would succeed. And she was proud of him! It was another omen.

It was eleven o'clock to the minute when Hilliard, not quite so blithe as a wedding guest, and yet not altogether as doleful as a mourner, waved his hand to a slender girl who stood on the veranda of a house diagonally across the street, and went slowly up the Durants' brick walk. He had anticipated the effect of this pilgrimage upon his nerves, he had discounted it; and Angela's advice had given him an artificial stimulus for the moment; nevertheless, as the front door opened to him, and he saw, over the head of a smirking maid-servant, a hallway and a vestibule unchanged, his breath came a little faster than usual, and his cheeks went a little darker.

It was, so to speak, a return to a shrine, and a normal man might easily be pardoned for a little sentiment on the side, no matter how often he had changed his religion during the meantime.

"Hurt?" Angela's voice was this with emphasis. "Rather!"

The maid, having deposited him in

the living room, disappeared in a quick flurry of skirts; Hilliard, standing at the end of the long, high-roofed apartment, found himself surrounded by a thousand goods to remembrance. Not an item was out of place; not an item was otherwise than as he had often recalled it; his memory had been photographic.

At the opposite end of the room, flanking the black-marbled fireplace, was a graceful, swan-necked sofa, beautifully carved and splendidly upholstered. Doctor Durant had once remarked that Carol represented the fifth successive generation of her family to be courted on it. And evening after evening, in the ages that had gone before, Hilliard had sat there and dreamed and loved; and sometimes when Carol had slipped away from him he had sat there and dreamed and



"Carol!"

loved and smoked, while she played Chopin and Rubinstein and Moscovski to him. And the piano—somewhat battle-scarred but with a master instrument—was still over in its accustomed place, with the "Military Polonaise" perched open on the rack.

Then his pupils narrowed to gray necks of ice; for memory, by one of those tricks against which there is no defense, told him that he stood in this same position, in exactly this same spot, when two years ago the doctor had pronounced his sentence, and Carol, in terrible silence, had then and there confirmed it. His imagination conjured up that scene again; his blood chilled; he could fancy that Carol and the doctor were actually before him, and that he was staring at them in the flesh, and feeling the lash of the doctor's quiet peroration. . . .

At the threshold there was a faint rustle of fabric, and Hilliard turned. Carol! His hands went out mechanically, and hers to him; and Hilliard, tasting the acid of his somber mood, smiled benignly.

"I mustn't keep you waiting," he said, dropping her hands. "I've brought you the letter I spoke about." He gave it to her, and coughed his embarrassment. "I'm positive it's for you. And I'm sure you don't want anything to prevent you from reading it at once, so if you'd rather prefer to have me come back later for the talk you wanted—"

He was already moving toward the doorway; she restrained him gently, although her eyes couldn't be dragged from the folded paper he had given her.

"No," she said, "please don't go. I particularly want you to meet my father, Mr. Hilliard. He's anxious to see you, too. Won't you wait while I call him?"

He inclined his head; followed her with his eyes to the hallway, strained his hearing, and knew that she had opened the letter as soon as she was out of his sight. His lips twitched cynically—and then, as he remembered Angela's injunction, straightened. After all, this much was pure charity. Down the hallway, there was the reverberation of a closing door, and silence.

Justice to Dick Morgan's memory.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

For Musical Beginners.

Builders of modern flats might well take a hint from a unique feature in Buckland's hotel in Brook street, now undergoing transformation to accommodate the new Guards club. This was a suite of "sound-proof" rooms called the "Handel suite," after the composer, who lived and died in Brook street, for the use of musically inclined visitors. This admirable arrangement enabled amateurs of such distressing instruments in the hands of the novice as the piccolo or the bagpipes to practice without disturbing their fellow-guests.—London Times.

HOME TOWN HELPS

FAVOR WELL-KEPT GROUNDS

Real-Estate Buyers Will Invariably Give Preference to House With Attractive Surroundings.

It pays to add a few frills when making a home, writes Edward Irving Farrington, in the Philadelphia Ledger. This fact was illustrated when a certain man owning a small suburban property found it necessary to make a quick sale. Having a keen appreciation of the beautiful in nature, this man had surrounded his modest house with ornamental trees and flowering shrubs. They had been growing for only a few years, to be sure, but they had become so well established that all appearance of newness had disappeared. Now, this man was able to obtain for his property 25 per cent more than a neighbor who had a costlier house, but who had neglected its external embellishment. Moreover, he sold his property several months before his neighbor could find a purchaser.

Now, of course, the average man will not plant grounds for the prime purpose of making his place salable. It must be admitted, in passing, though, that real-estate men the country over are beginning to learn that they can get a much larger price for their new houses if they plant the grounds before offering them for sale. From this point of view of the house owner, however, the free use of trees and shrubs is desirable in two ways. It adds greatly to his enjoyment and comfort and to that of his agreeable knowledge that these same trees and shrubs are rapidly growing into money. If he has any doubt upon the latter point he has only to put up a "For Sale" sign on his front gate. It is always the house which has been given an inviting, homelike appearance that catches the eyes of a prospective buyer.

FINE EFFECT AT SMALL COST

Concrete Front and Entrance Add Much to Attractiveness of Otherwise Unpretentious Home.

Viewed from the street, a residence in a middle-western city appears to be an expensive concrete building, though in reality the structure is made almost entirely of wood, and was erected at a very moderate cost. This effect is obtained by means of an artistic



Side View of the Dwelling: In This Picture Can Be Seen the Frame Portion of the Structure, Which is Scarcely Visible From the Street.

concrete front and entrance, which add to the beauty of the dwelling, but represent only a small outlay of cash. The entrance resembles a pergola, and includes two massive square columns, while the front is designed to harmonize. A small window is located on each side of the doorway.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

A Well-Laid Garden.

A garden has this advantage, that it makes it indifferent where you live. A well-laid garden makes the face of the country of no account; let that be low or high, grand or mean, you have made a beautiful abode worthy of man. If the landscape is pleasing, the garden shows it—If tame, it excludes it. A little grove, which any farmer can find or cause to grow near his house, will in a few years make contacts and chains of mountains quite unnecessary to his scenery; and he is so contented with his valleys, woodlands, orchards, and river, that Niagara, and the Notch of the White mountains, and Nantasket beach, are superfluous.—Emerson.

Cut Cost of City Lighting.

City administrators anxious to cut down running expenses will find much of interest in the proposal recently advanced by two illuminating engineers. A duplex electric street light is their suggestion, the globe to contain two lamps instead of one as at present. These lamps are to be placed tip to tip; one is to be of 600 to 1,000 cp; the other of 100 to 250 cp. From sundown until midnight, according to this scheme, the stronger lamp would burn. At midnight the city current would be momentarily reduced, causing a small mercury cut-out in each globe to extinguish the big lamp and turn on the smaller.—Popular Mechanics Magazine.

British Courts Bar Veils.

According to English law, a woman witness must raise her veil and expose her face, so that the jury may judge by her features as to her truthfulness.